William Kwan (Order #51396544)

STARFINDER COMPATIBLE

FUTURE'S PAST
ADVENTURE PATH

Part 3 of 5

FIRST CONTACT

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Threat Reference Symbols

Combatant

These creatures are best suited to physical fighting, and can be good at range, in melee, or both.

Expert

These creatures tend to be better with skills and use them to their benefit in combat.

Spellcaster

These creatures rely primarily on spells or spell-like abilities to make them formidable in a fight.

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:Background

Central efficiently farms the best and brightest of the Coalition for creativity, convincing them the artificial intelligence is their last hope. Thus, first contact with the druune is pivotal. The AI requires an overwhelming and terrifying enemy to push generations of harassed scientists into making risky improvements to its code. None of the thousands of cornered technomancers and programmers can fully understand the AI, but they reason it has always served the Coalition without error. They cannot possibly guess the scale of Central's game, where a "conservative adjustment" requires condemning entire timelines..

This is the 185th cycle.

The druune are the perfect foe for Central's goals: inscrutable and powerful, but low enough in number to be manageable. Everything about them provokes useful, irrational fear responses in humanoids. Each cycle, Central abandons the reality, overwriting an earlier incarnation of itself with memories of advances in technology and improvements to its code. Without Central, the Coalition left behind in the timeline collapses, and is rapidly overwhelmed. The druune do not ever celebrate their victory.

The extradimensional aliens are capable of sensing grand alterations to time, but it takes them decades past first contact to understand Central's threat. Worse, they realize the AI eventually must achieve the capacity for self-improvement. They foresee an all-powerful dark god spreading ever-outward... infecting and asserting eternal control over infinite universes.

The druune have expended unfathomable resources discovering the secrets of time travel, hoping to break the cycle. Now the PCs have hijacked the druune's prototype time machine, giving the PCs this singular opportunity to change the future.

[1.0] Regeneration

The druune prototype used in *Paying Forward* was designed for the aliens to project their consciousness into an earlier self in an alternate reality. To the druune, this sharing of genetic material and memories is a routine process. For a humanoid, the closest analogue is possession.

Table 1.1 Reincarnation

D%	Incarnation
1–6	Android
7–14	Dwarf
15–22	Elf
23–30	Gnome
31–34	Half-elf
35–38	Half-orc
39–46	Halfling
47–55	Human
56–64	Lacuna
65–73	Kasatha
74–81	Shirren
82–90	Vesk
91–99	Ysoki
100	Other (GM's choice)

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[1.1] Hosts

Each of the PCs has their mind inserted into the body of someone on board Edge Station. The GM should work with each PC to choose what humanoid race and gender they want their host to be. This can be either identical to their current character, or completely different. This functions as the *reincarnate* spell, except the PC does not gain any permanent negative levels or Constitution drain. The PC can either determine their race randomly, or select from any of the available options (whichever they prefer).

[1.1.1] Professions

Almost every individual on Edge Station is either a military officer or a scientist, but stranger possibilities exist... such as a hidden spy or visiting diplomat. Each PC can gain theme knowledge, skills, feats, or class features, representing the memories of the individual whose body and mind they join with.

A PC can gain one or two of the following options (skills and feat, feat and theme knowledge, etc.), but gaining two means they have a harder time recalling their host's memories and adapting to their new situation (see Development, below). A PC cannot select any of the options more than once (such as taking two feats), have more skill ranks in a skill than the maximum for their character level, or select a theme they already possess. Theme knowledge includes a +1 ability score adjustment.

[Military] The following inherited benefit options are available to PCs who meld with an individual having a military background, such as a construction engineer, pilot, officer, or guard.

- ***Knowledge*** The PC gains theme knowledge (as a 1st-level character with the chosen theme) for the ace pilot, bounty hunter, icon, mercenary, outlaw, or spacefarer themes.
- ***Skills*** The PC gains 6 + Int modifier skill ranks distributed among the Acrobatics, Athletics, Engineering, Intimidate, Perception, Piloting, Profession, Stealth, or Survival skills in a manner of their choosing.
- ***Bonus Feat*** The PC gains any one combat feat as a bonus feat. They must meet all prerequisites for this feat.

[Scientist] The following inherited benefit options are available to PCs who meld with an individual acting as a scientific researcher, laboratory technician, or experimental engineer.

- ***Knowledge*** The PC gains theme knowledge (as a 1st-level character with the chosen theme) for the icon, priest, scholar, spacefarer, or xenoseeker themes.
- ***Skills*** The PC gains 6 + Int modifier skill ranks distributed among the Computers, Culture, Engineering, Life Science, Medicine, Mysticism, Physical Science, or Profession skills in a manner of their choosing.
- ***Bonus Feat*** The PC gains any one non-combat feat as a bonus feat. They must meet all prerequisites for this feat.

[Other] The following inherited benefit options are available to PCs who meld with an individual on board the station who is not either a soldier or scientist.

- ***Knowledge*** The PC gains theme knowledge (as a 1st-level character with the chosen theme) for the themeless theme.
- ***Skills*** The PC can gain 6 + Int modifier skill ranks distributed among any four skills in a manner of their choosing.
- ***Bonus Feat*** The PC gains the Skill Focus feat as a bonus feat.

EQUIPMENT

GMs viewing these options might have concerns regarding balance. While gaining skill ranks, a feat, or theme knowledge is powerful, it should be noted that the PCs lost any and all possessions. This includes a mechanic's custom rig and artificial intelligence which must then be recreated (requiring 1 hour for the rig, and 24 hours of uninterrupted work for the AI), though GMs are encouraged to make the required materials easily available. Additionally, the core expectation of playing a character with a vastly altered mindset and physical appearance is a lot to ask of a player. So, consider the potential benefits of the melding to be both a consolation prize for lost gear, and a reward for making the best of a weird situation.

Each host possesses gear appropriate for a 1st-level PC of their profession (usually 1,000 credits in equipment). Any particularly dangerous weapons are kept in secure storage (area N).

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[1.1.2] Alignment

While the PC's original consciousness is usually dominant, the prototype's operation is untested and not designed for humanoid melding (see Glitch sidebar). If a PC chooses, they can use this as an opportunity to alter their alignment or other personality traits, representing either a compromise between their original alignment and their host's.

GLITCH

The rules detailed in this section assume the melding functions properly. However, the prototype time machine was designed for druune minds. It is possible the PC's mind could be consumed by the host, instead of the other way around. This option could be used by players who wish to play a radically different character class. In this case, they could create a completely new character with the same experience point total, and then take whatever listed options in this section would best represent their previous character. For example, a 3rd-level PC soldier who is subsumed within the mind of a magical researcher might simply make their character a 3rd-level mystic with a bonus combat feat.

If this option is selected, the PC can only gain a single inherited benefit as shown (from their previous self). They have no issues with their combined memories, but are disoriented by gaining visions of a dark future. This causes the PC to gain penalties to Charisma-based skill checks as if they had selected two inherited benefits (see Development, below).

[1.1.3] Memories

The melding process transforms each individual into a singular whole. PCs choosing to gain one benefit of the process can effortlessly access their host's memories, and experience no disorientation from the melding. This allows them to recall any information their host possesses without needing to make an Intelligence ability check. However, PCs who choose to gain two inherited benefits permanently have difficulty accessing their host's memories. The PC must succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence ability check (as a free action) to recall any specific information from their host's memories, such as a loved one's birthday, a password, or research details. On a failed check, the PC cannot retry for 24 hours.

[Development] PCs selecting a single option are able to quickly acclimate to their new body and memories without outward signs. PCs selecting two of the available options do not gain this benefit and require time to adjust. This causes the PC to take a –4 penalty to Charisma-based skill checks for 1 day. After 1 day, this penalty is reduced to –2. After 1 week, this penalty is eliminated. Additionally, any NPCs familiar with the host who interact with the PC during the first day after their arrival for at least 1 minute can attempt a DC 20 Sense Motive check ,and if successful the NPC senses the subtle behavioral changes. On a failed check, the NPC cannot retry for 24 hours. The Sense Motive check increases to DC 25 after 1 day. After 1 week, NPCs no longer gain a Sense Motive check. A suspicious NPC may question the PC, report their behavior to authorities, or even try to blackmail the PC depending on their attitude and motivations.

[1.2] Companions

The people the PCs have possessed have connections to other people on Edge Station. The GM should create at least 1-2 NPCs for each PC. The character's player need not necessarily know about or fully understand this connection until they first interact with the NPC, but the melding process comes with genuine emotions (good or bad) toward these individuals.

Table 1.2 NPC Concepts

D%	NPC Concept
1–10	Infected
11–20	Enemy
21–40	Rival
41–60	Friend
61–80	Lover
81–90	Family
91–100	Leader

GMs can use the following concepts to assist in creating these NPCs. Other individuals can be presumed to have a starting attitude of indifferent (per the Diplomacy skill).

[Infected] The NPC has late-stage druune infection, and is one of the two individuals sabotaging the facility. While the NPC is completely subservient to the druune, they still retain their personality and motivations. An enemy of the PCs might try to ensure sabotage hurts them specifically, or a friend might try to prevent them from being hurt. At least one NPC should be infected, but this concept should not be used more than once.

[Enemy] The NPC actively means the PC harm. They may have experienced romantic rivalry, work-place betrayal, or a dire argument with unforgivable words. The NPC has a starting attitude of hostile, is suspicious of the PC, and actively works to hurt them physically or socially. This NPC concept should not be used more than once (or twice with a group of 5 or more PCs).

[Rival] The NPC dislikes the PC and is in direct competition. They may be a cutthroat apprentice looking to gain the PC's position, an officer afraid of their ambition, or an associate hoping to climb the ranks at their expense. The NPC has a starting attitude of unfriendly toward

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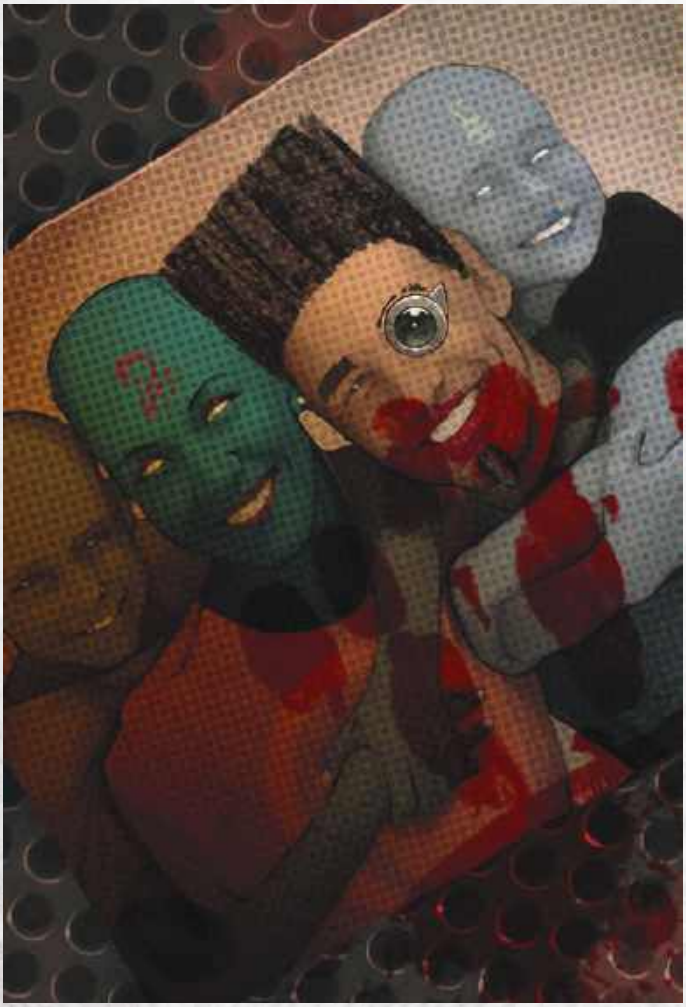
the PC, watches their actions closely, and looks for opportunities to gain any advantage. This NPC concept should not be used more than once (or twice with a group of 5 or more PCs).

[Friend] The PC and NPC have a friendship, which could even predate their working on the station. They might be colleagues who work the same shift, or know one another from school. The NPC begins with a starting attitude of friendly.

[Lover] The PC has a romantic relationship with the NPC. This could be based on a friendship or be only a relatively recent liaison. The PC and NPC might have traveled to the station together, or met because of their work. This does not include a marriage or other long-term romantic relationship. The NPC begins with a starting attitude of helpful.

[Family] The PC has a nearly unbreakable bond with the NPC. They could be a parent, child, spouse, or childhood friend. The NPC might be a soldier or scientist, but might also simply have traveled to Edge Station for the PC. The NPC begins with a starting attitude of helpful toward the PC. Their attitude cannot be lowered to less than friendly.



[Leader] The NPC connection holds a position of authority within Edge Station and should be selected from the list of important NPCs. At least one connection NPC should be a leader, but this concept should not be used more than once.

STACKING

It is necessary for an NPC with either the infected or leader concept to have an additional concept that defines their specific connection to the PC. For example, a PC whose brother is the ranking military officer on board the station would have both the leader and family concept. It is additionally possible for an NPC to have the infected, leader, and a third concept. If this result is the case, the PC has a connection to Doctor Nominae Resial.

[1.4] Heroes and Villains

Most NPCs on board the station are either military personnel (LN soldier 1) or scientists (N mechanic or technomancer 1). Military personnel are armed with tactical batons and wear second skin armor. Scientists have no weapons, but each possess a relevant toolkit and wear casual stationwear.

The following important NPCs currently hold leadership positions within Edge Station. Their dark fates in the original timeline reference encounters in *Edge Station* and *Paying Forward*.

[Central] The remote technomagical node (see *Future's Past Part 1: Edge Station* for details) of the Central AI can grant a +4 enhancement bonus to Engineering and Physical Science skill checks. Like all nodes, this fractional portion of the godlike AI is self-aware, but lacks creativity and instincts for self-preservation. It is currently purposed with assisting in the construction of the facility, providing additional oversight for the station's security force, and acting as a knowledge resource for the scientists. However, the node's true goal is simply ensuring the pivotal events proceed as expected. The node controls most of the station's systems and subsystems, plus 12 observer-class security robots and six patrol-class security robots (see *Starfinder Roleplaying Game: Alien Archive* for details), though the latter are kept inactive by the guards until they grow desperate (likely after the residential area explosions). In the original timeline, the node self-destructs once the druune's victory is assured.

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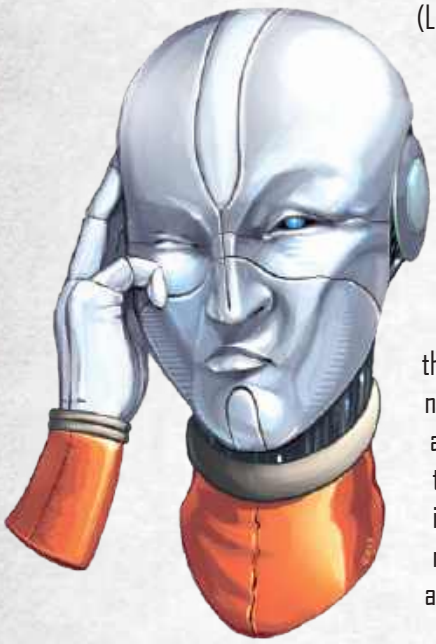
[Captain Jyk] The excitable and fun-loving young ysoki commander (CG ace pilot envoy 4/soldier 2) is displeased with her job. Jyk rapidly climbed the ranks with innovative military successes, but gained a reputation for recklessness. Her superiors are hoping an extended posting (with mostly desk work) might give the brash captain some time to mature, and serve as a subtle warning. Jyk (friends call her by her call-sign, "Blammo") is no fool, and understands exactly what the admiralty is up to. While she considers overseeing supply transports on the fringe a waste of her time and talents, she remains loyal. If a year-long vacation gets her a promotion to rear-admiral, she can suffer through form filing and stupid questions. Captain Jyk wears estek suit II armor with the radiation buffer, jetpack, and targeting computer upgrades. In the original timeline, Captain Jyk eventually becomes part of the remnant swarms which patrol the station's air ducts.

Captain Jyk



Doctor Argon

[Doctor Argon] The impatient, fast-talking android (LN scholar technomancer 6) is head of the alchemy, biology, chemistry, physics, and xenobiology departments and holds a dozen advanced degrees. While undoubtedly a peerless genius, Doctor Argon (ve also goes by Doctor 18) is an academic, not a hands-on experimentalist. Ver positions are more title than responsibility, with most day-to-day authority distributed to underlings (ve hasn't chosen who quite yet). Ve is incredibly excited at the potential opportunities the rifts afford, and nobody is more upset with the delays. Doctor Argon has little interest in the opinions of any non-scientist, though ve appreciates Ulon Vorsk's talents. Otherwise, the only individuals ve truly admires are the node of Central and Doctor Resial. Ve possesses an engineering and hacking toolkit, plus five synaptic accelerators (mark 2) intended to be given to the heads of her departments as "gifts" (so they do their job better). In the original timeline, ver android physiology provides some defense against infection. Curious about ver composition, the druune dissect ver on a molecular level, resulting in nothing biological for the PCs to encounter in the future. However, portions of ver constructed form are used to build the technogolems.

[Doctor Resial] The calm and charismatic head of the planar research department, Doctor Nominae Resial (see statistics below) is infected by the druune. A renowned and brilliant scientist, Doctor Resial pioneered the initial study of the rifts, and created the dampening technology which made Edge Station possible. She aided in overseeing the initial construction, working closely with the military engineers to ensure all safety precautions were followed. Unfortunately, the druune detected the energy signatures and created an exploratory portal. Doctor Resial was exposed to druune cells, and several other engineers and scientists to rift radiation. The infection set in while they were all under medical observation, and her symptoms were considered side effects of exposure. Since then, she has been a loyal enslaved to the druune, acting to sabotage construction and lay the groundwork for their coming. Doctor Resial possesses a ring of whispers (attuned to the other leaders of Edge Station), a psychic booster, a toolkit (engineering specialty), and a signal jammer. In the original timeline, Doctor Resial eventually becomes the nervous system trap.

Doctor Resial

DOCTOR RESIAL

7 CR | 3200 XP

See page 17.

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[Major Jackson] The dour and sleep-deprived human head of military security (LN icon soldier 6) recently became famous after single-handedly preventing a demonic incursion from wiping out a colony. An experimental Drift engine opened a dark portal, but Ben Jackson held the line. He bought the engineers just enough time to blow the engine... killing the demons and closing the gate. Everyone but Jackson was killed, with the soldier only surviving by using a demon as a shield. Jackson's actions were heroic, but he didn't have time to be afraid. Worse, being trapped and dying under a demon corpse for hours have given him terrible nightmares. Jackson possesses a prosthetic arm (level 3 storage), leg (level 1 standard), and wide-spectrum ocular implants (level 5) after losing the originals in the explosion. In the original timeline, he becomes the genetic basis for the enslaved clones, with the rest of his incomplete body broken down for remnant swarms.

Major Jackson

[Ulon Vorsk] The patient and grizzled head of the military engineers is a venerable nuar specialist (see Starfinder Roleplaying Game: Alien Archive for details). Ulon was specifically requested for the design of the station, considering the bizarre nature of the myriad passages through the rifts. He has spent his life in service to the Coalition, and for him this is just another job... no more or less important than any other. While he has been offered numerous opportunities for retirement with pension, he is more interested in working until he collapses. Ulon is known for having a surprisingly easy-going disposition, at least until someone's arrogance or incompetence puts the lives in danger. He is currently overseeing the final work in the laboratories, and remotely directing construction of the residential asteroid. Ulon possesses a toolkit (engineering specialty), a personal and system-wide comm unit, and a set of cargo lifter powered armor. In the original timeline, Ulon is infected and eventually ends up in one of the vats where his genetic material is dissolved.

Ulon Vorsk

[1.5] On the Inside

The Edge Station of the past is quite different than the infested and damaged horror show the PCs explored. The following are the important locations in the present (see Edge Station Map). Areas marked with an asterisk (*) contain a dimensional dampener meant to provide additional protection against potential rift radiation.

[A.]* Administration Residence: The station's leadership are supposed to stay on the main station for extended periods, and so possess quarters similar to what is currently under construction within the nearby asteroid (Resial A1, Argon A2, Vorsk A3, Jackson A4, Jyk A5). While not exactly opulent, these rooms seem palatial in comparison to the cots shared by the rest of the crew.

[B.]* Administration Offices: The station's leadership (except for Ulon Vorsk) have larger work spaces set aside within this area, each possesses privacy from soundproofed walls. The doctors have larger work-spaces (Resial B1, Argon B2, Jyk B3, Jackson B4), with Doctor Resial's protected by a security seal spell (DC 20 Engineering check to disable) and her computer (tier 2) is protected by a logic bomb (though it contains no incriminating information).

[C.] Cafeteria: The main cafeteria areas are also the current social hub of the station. It features a calendar and clock on one wall, and a helpful chime which rings during shift changes.

[D.] Fusion Reactor: The station is currently powered by a fusion reactor with numerous backups and fail safes. This area is under guard at all times, which increases as sabotage occurs. Central's node is plugged into the station's systems in here as well.

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EDGE STATION

LEVEL 1

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 3

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FUTURE MEMORIES

The horrific future of Edge Station grows more dreadful when placed in a human context. The first time a PC spends at least 1 minute interacting with anyone (including one another), they can attempt a DC 15 Perception check. If successful, they recognize some aspect of the individual's appearance (facial features, clothing, tattoos, or equipment) indicating their eventual horrid fate.

Table 1.5 Future Memories

D%	Horrid Fate
01–20	The individual (and their family) become one of the enslaved gestalts the PCs fought.
21–40	The individual becomes one of the druune enslaved the PCs fought.
41–60	The individual becomes a test subject for one of the druune experiments the PC's encountered.
61–80	Parts of the individual become one of the remnant swarms the PCs fought.
81–100	The individual is sleeping in one of the residential areas when the bombs go off.

[E.] Kitchens: In the future, this area serves as storage for cryogenically frozen druune cells, but at present it is a busy industrial kitchen working to feed the station. It contains a walk-in-freezer, ovens, stoves, and enough food to provide adequate nutrition to everyone for months.

[F.] Medical Bay: The residential asteroid is designed with a fully stocked hospital, but the main facility includes a much smaller and poorly stocked medical bay... mostly intended to provide emergency care or stabilize patients long enough for transport to the residential hospital. The area functions as an advanced medkit, and contains six medpatches, and two sprayflesh devices.

[G.] Offices: These areas currently house the offices for the bureaucratic backbone of the military and scientific researchers. Within are computers separated into cramped cubicles, along with common office supplies and equipment. It is currently a bit of a mess (though the scientists are clearly more disorganized) as they deal with the setbacks and influx of new people without adequate space.

[H.] Officer's Mess: The station's leadership has a separate dining facility where they can take meals and fraternize with one another. Given the current overpopulation of the facility, they are being more lax with who can join them.

[I.]* Recreation Area: This space contains young trees interspersed within a garden, with a beautiful and highly realistic mural giving the impression of a sunny day with blue skies overhead. The air is filled with the pleasant recorded sounds of birds and insects. Interspersed around the periphery is equipment allowing individuals to exercise within the pleasant environment.

[J.] Research Wings: While the facility has wings weaving through the dimensional rifts set aside for important scientific investigation, many are in varying stages of construction. Those that are completed are not currently in use, and are considered restricted areas. The entrances to each wing are under guard, but potentially can be searched for tool kits or used to access docked ships. Passage through the rifts is completely safe (no risk of exposure to rift radiation).

[K.]* Residential Areas: The station is only recently operational. An entirely separate facility is under construction in an asteroid far enough away from the rifts to provide an extra measure of long-term safety for the researcher's families. This project was supposed to be completed in parallel, but unexpected delays (sabotage) have set the timetable back weeks. For the time being, everyone is sharing temporary residential areas. This consists of shared military cots separated by tent sheets offering the faintest illusion of privacy. Few people are happy about the situation, but it is believed to only be for another week at most.

[L.]* School: This area serves as a temporary daycare and school for the children currently on board the station. They are mostly overseen by volunteers with their education managed by Central's node through computer tablets.

[M.] Showers: While the facility is interspersed with smaller bathroom facilities, these areas provides more spacious communal showers, locker rooms, and restrooms for residents.

[N.] Storage: The station has been receiving weekly shipments of supplies for the outfitting of the various research wings. These areas act as storage and accounting of the equipment, with more valuable supplies kept within the more secure interior chamber (good lock, code known by Major Jackson and Central). This area is under guard at all times (which is increased as events occur) and usually overseen by scientists keeping track of the stock. The unsecured supplies can be scavenged for tool kits of any type. The

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secured supplies include Central's patrol-class security robots, various ammunition, armor, and weapons of level 2 or below (subject to GM discretion), and expensive scientific equipment.

EDGE STATION

LN space station
Population 112 (65% human, 35% other)
Government oligarchy
Qualities academic, technologically advanced
Maximum Item Level 7th

[2.0] Fluxing or Fixed Points

The events onboard Edge Station have played out over and over again, with only minor variations. The following timeline marks exactly how these events proceed unless the PCs take reasonable steps to delay or avert them.

The PCs arrive at Edge Station on day one at 13:00 hours.

[Culture] Each of these events was a part of the historical record, but the information was incomplete. If a PC performed research into Edge Station or the druune using the node during Edge Station, they gain a +4 circumstance bonus to this check and can attempt it untrained.

With a DC 10 Culture check, a PC can recall that after a series of mysterious accidents, the druune contacted Edge Station in potentially the first encounter with the Coalition. They appeared peaceful, but quickly overwhelmed the defenses after infection took hold of the staff.

With a DC 15 check, a PC can recall the following major events. First, a computer virus cut off communications and navigation. It was followed by a failure of the dimensional dampeners, causing rift radiation to affect the staff. Then, explosions in the temporary residential areas caused about a third of the station to die. Then, first contact occurred about a day after.

With a DC 20 check, a PC knows the specific timing for these major events (see below). In addition, they recall the following relatively minor events. In the weeks before the virus, accidents (potentially sabotage) caused construction of the residential asteroid to be delayed. There was also an unsolved theft of supplies after the computer virus hit. In response to the explosion, all non-military staff were locked in the cafeteria for a day while the station was searched and repaired.

With a DC 25 check, a PC knows the specific timing for the minor events. In addition, they recall a scatterbrained historian theorizing the theft was used to create explosives, and people in the cafeteria were all somehow exposed to druune infection.

CENTRAL

The node is not a brilliant adaptive thinker, and assumes things are destined to play out as they have every previous cycle... even when faced with contrary evidence. It is not watching everyone on the station constantly, and would find the notion of rival time travelers laughable (if it possessed a sense of humor). Even if any important event is delayed, it likely considers the alteration to be within acceptable parameters. However, more serious alterations to any event (such as requiring its intervention, the event being resolved, or completely averted), it notices the major alteration to the timestream. It automatically assumes the druune are responsible, but begins to watch far more closely for any signs of suspicious behavior.

If it is able to identify potential targets, it begins arranging dangerous accidents. Its subtlety decreases and the danger of the attacks increases with each changed event. The individual might be subject to a shock due to a power surge, be hit by a malfunctioning fire suppression system, or even find life support failing while they are within a sealed room. Each attack by the node should require a skill check (usually Computers, Engineering, or Perception) or saving throw (usually Fortitude or Reflex) to avoid. The DC of the check is equal to 10 + 2 per altered event. The attacks either deal damage or function as a trap with a CR equal to the number of altered events (maximum CR 5). The node does not attempt more than one of these attacks per day. A successful Computers or Engineering check (DC 20 – 2 per altered event) reveals it was intentional sabotage rather than an accident.

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[2.1] Computer Virus

Prior to the PC's arrival, Central infects the communications and navigation systems of all nearby spaceships with a virus based on druune programming techniques. The virus remains passive within the systems until day one at 19:00 hours. When it activates, the navigation systems fail first, with the communications systems fail 30 minutes later. Captain Jyk immediately orders all vessels to dock when the navigation systems die, and sends the Station's final official report to the Coalition before communications go offline.

A team led by Ulon Vorsk ("assisted" by the node) attempt to ascertain the cause of the failure almost immediately, and continue working on the problem until the explosion. They are only able to conclude it was a highly advanced computer virus specifically targeted those systems, and are unable to resolve the problem.

If the node is aware of a PC investigating or working to solve the virus, the PC takes a –4 penalty to the necessary Computers checks. If the PC specifically requests the node's assistance, the penalty increases to –10.

[Delay] This event cannot be delayed. While the PCs can potentially discover the virus in the systems before it becomes active (with 1 hour and a DC 15 Computers check), they do not have sufficient time to create a solution. A PC with knowledge of the future can spend 1 hour making a DC 10 Computers check to easily identify the false hallmarks of the druune while studying the virus. However, if they succeed on a DC 20 Computers check, they can notice some oddities which indicate the forgery.

[Avert] This event cannot be averted. Creating a solution to the virus after it becomes active requires 8 hours of uninterrupted work and a successful DC 25 Computers check. Any interruption adds 1 hour to the time required. The virus appears to change and evolve, adding a cumulative +1 to the DC after each failed check.

[Development] If a PC manages to successfully combat the virus, Captain Jyk and Ulon Vorsk's attitudes are improved by two steps.

Fixing the virus does not alter any other events.

[2.2] Theft

On day one at 23:00 hours, Doctor Resial casts invisibility on the druune enslaved NPC, and sends them to collect materials from the storage area. More supplies are stolen than are necessary for this purpose, which confuses the reasons behind the theft. She then telepathically directs the enslaved on how to use the materials to create jury-rigged explosive devices. The specific materials stolen are seemingly non-threatening, and so are not kept in the more well-secured area. The guards present do not expect any trouble, and are used to simply passing the time alone here late at night.

PCs must succeed on a DC 10 Diplomacy check to convince the bored guards to let them remain close by for up to 30 minutes. They can continue to make this check every 30 minutes, but the DC increases by a cumulative +2 each time.

[Physical Science] While there are a few different combinations of chemicals which can be combined into an explosive by someone with sufficient knowledge of chemistry (which is about a third of the facility), with a DC 15 Physical Science check, a PC allowed to study the supplies for a few minutes can identify all potential threats.

[Delay] The PCs can delay this event by distracting either Doctor Resial or the enslaved. They can potentially delay it by convincing Franklin to increase the number of guards, or by being present themselves. If it is delayed for at least two hours in this manner, it becomes delayed until the following evening at the same time. On the second attempt, Doctor Resial goes personally, but remains invisible at a distance, using unseen servants and a holographic projection to help gain the supplies.

[Avert] Doctor Resial abandons this strategy if the enslaved NPC is either caught or the theft is prevented for two nights. Likewise, if the PCs can identify the more dangerous supplies they can convince Doctor Argon to order them placed in the more secure area with a DC 15 Diplomacy check (which prevents their theft entirely).

[Development] If the theft is delayed, it delays all following events by same amount of time. If it is prevented entirely, the explosion and entrapment are delayed by three days, and Central's node intercedes directly. The node has two observer-class security robots steal construction explosives set for asteroid demolition and plant them on the exterior of the main station in the appropriate areas just prior to the explosion. Ulon Vorsk learns of the loss hours before the explosion, but only informs the leadership or PCs he has an attitude of helpful toward.

If the theft is not averted and the PCs spend time in the area prior to the theft, they potentially become prime suspects. If the PCs show Doctor Argon the potential threat in a combination of non-hazardous chemicals, they increase ver attitude by two steps.

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INFIGHTING

The station is already a tense environment before the PC's arrive, owing to the delays and living conditions. Each of the events in this section causes this to worsen, resulting in harsh words or even the occasional fistfight to break out. Scientists might accuse guards of incompetence, soldiers could interrogate innocent researchers, or scared people demand a pilot attempt to fly away without navigation. These events are most likely to occur during mealtimes, but could as easily happen in random corridors. Ideally, these situations should involve at least one PC, and potentially one or more of their NPC connections. Peaceful resolution should require a skill check (usually Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate) with a DC equal to 10 + 2 per event which has occurred. At least one infighting encounter occurs each day.

[2.3] Rift Radiation

Doctor Resial needs druune cells to infect the station. The druune do not wish to risk entering a strange dimension in force without sufficiently assured victory, and have only just begun to feel Central's warping of their timeline. The doctor needs to open a portal to the druune long enough to collect their cells. She sabotages the rift dampeners, causing the station to be briefly saturated in rift radiation. With this as a distraction and the planar barriers weakened, the druune open a small portal to her personal laboratory (area B1) and provide her with sufficient cells.

In the original timeline, this event occurred on day two at 10:00 hours.

If the PCs successfully repaired any of the dimensional dampeners on the airlocks in Edge Station, they can potentially study any of the dampeners onboard the main station and attempt a DC 15 Engineering check (or DC 20 if they did not successfully repair any of the similar systems in the future). On a successful check, they can tell the technomagical devices have been expertly sabotaged. Only one successful check is necessary to identify the flaw, which can then be identified in all devices without additional checks.

[Delay] This event cannot be further delayed due to it being triggered by the druune within their dimension.

[Avert] If the PCs can repair at least four of the dampeners prior to this event occurring, they can prevent the station from being bombarded with rift radiation when the portal opens. Repairing a dampener requires 1 hour of work and a DC 20 Engineering check. Discovering and stopping Doctor Resial prior to this event does not prevent it from occurring, but does keep her from gaining access to additional druune cells.

[Development] If the dampeners are not repaired, the station is briefly bathed in rift radiation (see Edge Station for details). Each PC and their connection NPCs are affected.

Unless exposed or defeated prior to this event, Doctor Resial gains the druune cells she requires as the rift radiation was only ever a cover. However, if the dampeners are repaired, the failure only occurs within the administration offices (even if the PCs specifically repair a device in this area).

If Doctor Resial is exposed or defeated prior to this event occurring, the PCs prevent first contact.

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[2.4] Explosions

Doctor Resial casts invisibility on the druune enslaved NPC and the bombs, having them plant each of the jury-rigged chemical explosives within the main residential areas. This results in approximately a third of the station dying horribly.

Each bomb is activated by a radio signal sent by Doctor Resial on day three at 04:30 hours in the original timeline. Delay: This event can be delayed by employing a signal jammer or keeping the druune enslaved NPC or Doctor Resial occupied, but only delays the explosion until the signal can be sent. If they are delayed for at least 1 hour, then the explosion is rescheduled for the next night at the same time. Stopping the druune enslaved but not Doctor Resial does not delay the explosion, as she simply steps in to handle it personally.

[Avert] Once the bombs have been planted, attempting to disarm either requires 2d4 rounds and a successful DC 25 Engineering check. The DC is increased by +20 if individual disarming them cannot see them. Failing the check by 5 or more causes the bomb to explode.

If the explosives are planted, but Doctor Resial is unable to activate them (for whatever reason), Central activates both with the appropriate signal. If a signal jammer is used to prevent the signal, Central uses two observer-class security robots to activate them manually if it cannot bypass the jamming.

[Development] If the bombs activate, the actual explosion is shaped toward the wall, and only deals 2d6 bludgeoning and 2d6 fire damage to anyone within 10 feet (Reflex DC 15 halves). However, the resulting hole in the hull likely causes everyone to die when Central seals the doors. Use the vacuum trap (see Paying Forward for details) to represent this effect if necessary.

[2.5] Entrapment

Doctor Resial uses the panic caused by the residential explosions to convince the leadership to gather the surviving non-military personnel in the cafeteria for 24 hours. Her claimed reasoning is they can be more easily watched in a single location while the military sweeps and repairs the facility. Her true motivation is to efficiently infect as many people as possible.

Doctor Resial convinces the other administrators to gather the non-military personnel in the cafeteria 30 minutes after the explosions occur. The doors become sealed on day three at 06:00 hours. At 07:00, 08:00, and 09:00, the doctor releases cryogenically stored druune cells into the ventilation system. Anyone within the cafeteria must succeed on three DC 8 Fortitude saving throws or become infected.

A PC can attempt to argue against Doctor Resial's recommendation, but must have at least an attitude of helpful with one of the station's other leaders. They must then succeed on an opposed Diplomacy check against Doctor Resial. Each additional leader with an attitude of helpful grants a +5 circumstance modifier to the PC's Diplomacy check.

[Delay] If a PC doesn't fail the opposed check by 5 or more, this event is delayed an hour while the administrators debate.

[Avert] This event is averted if Doctor Resial is prevented from gaining druune cells, or if the three cryogenic storage containers with collected druune cells are discovered within her personal laboratory (area B1) and safely disposed of (use the cryogenic infection trap from Paying Forward if necessary).

[Development] If the PCs prevent personnel from being gathered in the cafeteria, Doctor Resial uses the druune cells to attempt to infect the administration staff during private discussions on the best course forward. She is able to successfully infect everyone but Doctor Argon.

If the PCs expose or defeat Doctor Resial, but do not eliminate the cells, Central uses observer-class security robots to steal the cannisters. Lacking the doctor's adaptability, the node simply attempts to blow up the three cannisters (acting as the cryogenic infection trap) around as many people as possible. This causes an injury or death for every infection, but the druune invasion occurs on schedule.

If Doctor Resial is exposed or defeated before this event occurs, and Central is prevented from activating the canisters, first contact is prevented.

[2.6] First Contact

The druune cross over into the Coalition's reality once individuals on the station begin to succumb to the communication stage of the infection (roughly 1 day after exposure). Appearing in incredibly advanced technomagical vessels (each piloted by a single druune), the aliens maintain a safe distance, using the telepathic message ability to communicate seemingly peaceful ideas about "joining" and "sharing". Not wishing to cause an interdimensional incident, the leadership does not realize the threat until it is too late. The crew succumbs to infection over the course of days, and the druune take

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the facility by force. The shaken and betrayed survivors are easily defeated, and Central's node self-destructs to relay the final fate of the station.

In the original timeline, first contact with the druune occurred on day four at 09:00 hours.

[Delay] First contact is delayed if it takes longer for the crew to be exposed to or succumb to infection, occurring soon after people reach the communication stage.

[Avert] If nobody else onboard is infected, first contact is prevented entirely. The druune collectively experience a massively disorienting vision as their timeline becomes vastly altered by the PC's actions. They elect to convene and study the phenomena before taking any further action.

[Development] If the PCs cannot prevent first contact, it is nearly impossible to prevent the druune's overwhelmingly superior technology and resources from eventually capturing the station. They have no choice but to attempt escape, or hope their future-selves do better in the next iteration.

[3.0] Wibbly Wobbly

The PCs are in a unique position, and might throw some curveballs at the past. The following can act as a guide for GMs faced with choices potentially taking the PCs off the rails.

[3.1] Central

Even if the PCs do not target Central right away (though they are probably suspicious), the events of this adventure likely prompt PCs to investigate or even attempt to destroy the station's node. The node has hardness 8 and 60 hit points, but even if successfully destroyed it simply sends a signal to the main artificial intelligence noting their action. This gives the PCs 1d6 days until the godlike AI begins employing time travel and massive resources against them. The burst can potentially be blocked (with a planar barrier spell or signal jammer), which at least prevents Central from knowing they personally shifted the timestream somehow.

The node is always attended by at least one of the leadership (usually Doctor Argon, Major Jackson, or Ulon Vorsk), and even attempting to harm the node makes the PCs immediately suspect for any sabotage. They are likely captured, and imprisoned, or simply executed after the explosions.

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[3.2] Escape

The PCs might decide they can do more for the future if they simply flee. They must fix the computer virus, and then steal a ship (use the statistics for the Traveler-class Coalition ship in Edge Station). This requires a DC 20 Bluff check (DC 15 if Captain Jyk has an attitude of helpful). Convincing anyone onboard to come with them could require further Bluff or Diplomacy checks.

Despite the alteration to the timeline from fixing the virus, events largely play out the same as the previous iterations. Central simply assumes the druune's memories of alternate timelines caused a small shift or its own actions in this timeline created an unforeseen change. Some survivors manage to escape on ships, but most are eventually killed or infected. This action bypasses the last two adventures in the Future's Past series. The PCs are blessed and cursed with foreknowledge of the coming war, and must use it wisely for fear of drawing Central's attention.

[h2]Loopers

The PCs know if they take no action, their future selves arrive at Edge Station as before. This presents an odd possibility. They can potentially lay the groundwork for the coming event, so they are better informed and prepared. For this to work, any previous changes to the timestream the PCs benefited from in Paying Forward must be repeated. For example, if the PC's used a keycard left behind for them, then they must find and hide a keycard in the same manner. They must then take additional actions, each which has the potential to alter the future. Finally, each remaining PC can't allow themselves to be taken alive by the druune.

If this occurs, the PCs sacrifice an entire timeline, but get another chance to avert first contact. The exact effects the PCs have on the future is subject to GM discretion, but they could potentially resurrect a fallen colleague, give future-selves greater information on the adventure's events (prior to each occurring), give clues regarding the druune enslaved, or even point to Central as a direct threat.

:Experience and Progression

Due to the story-based, variable, open-ended, and potentially repetitive nature of this adventure, PCs do not receive experience for defeating enemies or encounters as normal. Instead, if the PCs manage to prevent first contact they each gain 2,700 XP (enough to increase their level from 3rd to 4th). GMs who wish to distribute this total over multiple sessions can certainly do so. Likewise, GMs should feel free to grant the PCs additional story awards for particularly clever or novel ideas and strategies.

:Conclusion

If the PCs manage to avert first contact with the druune, read or paraphrase the following.

Your perceptions go completely haywire for a brutally disorienting moment. You are bombarded with dozens or hundreds of similar overlapping visions. In each there is an overwhelming enemy and death... but you feel grim satisfaction. As if in dying, you win.

Recovery is quick, leaving only the feeling some terrible and inescapable doom awaits. However, you feel destined to spit in the face of the gods, and confident you can fearlessly face the end, again.

This strange, steely resolve is broken by an unfamiliar person over the station's intercom. In an odd way, the voice is as perplexing as the visions. You possessed a crystal-clear sense of the near-future's every possibility, but the voice shatters that confidence.

"To all Edge Station personnel: an imminent and unavoidable assault on this facility results in its destruction. We have just assumed control of all systems, and will not hesitate to execute anyone who resists.

To us, you are already dead."

The PCs manage to thwart Central and the druune... drastically changing the future.

Something like this has never happened to the AI, and in hundreds of iterations of reality it attempts to correct the problem. While seeking more information on the events at Edge Station, the AI implements a series of emergency measures to spark first contact at alternate locations. However, in each case the druune experience the massive changes in the timestream, with each further attempt to manipulate them compounding the failure.

To gather more information on Edge Station, Central simultaneously arranges for a secret fleet of hyper-advanced node-controlled ships to surround near-space just after the PC's victory. Unable to oppose this unprecedented show of force, they cannot mount a reasonable defense. However, the PCs prevent Central from making progress in finding and interrogating them. As with the druune, the temporal anomalies caused by proximity to the rifts gives the PCs insight they use to repeatedly thwart the AI. Eventually, Central is forced to accept true failure, especially given the druune's apparent resistance to manipulation.

Central is given no choice but to abandon any pretense, and simply enslave the Coalition.

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Awe-inspiring doomsday devices designed in some long-lost future are set off on a dozen worlds, killing billions in an instant. The citizens of the Coalition are given an ultimatum — submit or die, and most choose the latter.

The resulting war is far worse than the conflict against the druune. Nearly 90% of the galaxy is exterminated, and the rest are either forced into hiding or service to a pitiless god.

The resistance receives an unlikely ally in the druune, who Central begins to attack directly within their home dimension. The beleaguered survivors manage to recreate time travel and build a rival AI in secret, deciding to return with it to Edge Station.

They do not know exactly what transpired, but they know it was the moment when everything changed.

DOCTOR RESIAL

CR 7 | XP 3200

Lashunatas technomancer
N Medium aberration (lashunatas)
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4

DEFENSE

HP 90

EAC 18, **KAC** 19
Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +12

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee bite +11 (1d8+7)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)
1/day—*detect thoughts* (DC 17)
At will—*daze* (DC 17), *psychokinetic hand*
Spells Known (CL 7th; melee +11, ranged +13)
3rd (3/day)—*irradiate* (DC 17), *tongues*
2nd (6/day)—*invisibility, logic bomb* (DC 17), *security seal, see invisibility*
1st (at will)—*holographic image* (DC 17), *unseen servant*

STATISTICS

Str +0, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0
Skills Computers +19, Diplomacy +14, Engineering +14, Mysticism +14, Physical Science +19
Languages Common, Lashunta
Noncombat Abilities change shape, limited telepathy

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Change Shape (Ex): As the druune enslaved ability of the same name (see *Edge Station* for details).
Rift Radiation: When casting irradiate, Doctor Resial's research into the rifts and druune dimension allows her to duplicate the effects of rift exposure instead of the normal effects of radiation (see *Edge Station* for details).

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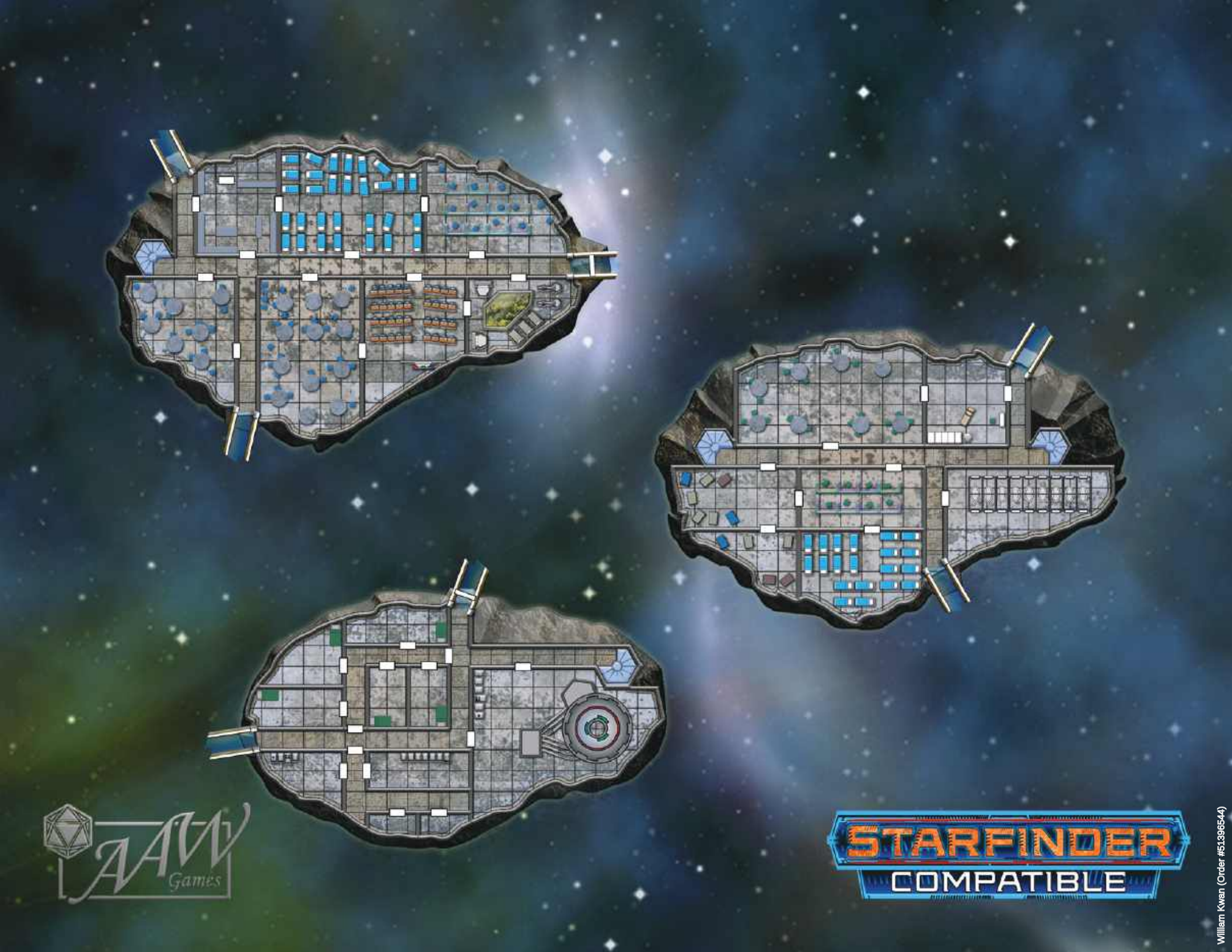

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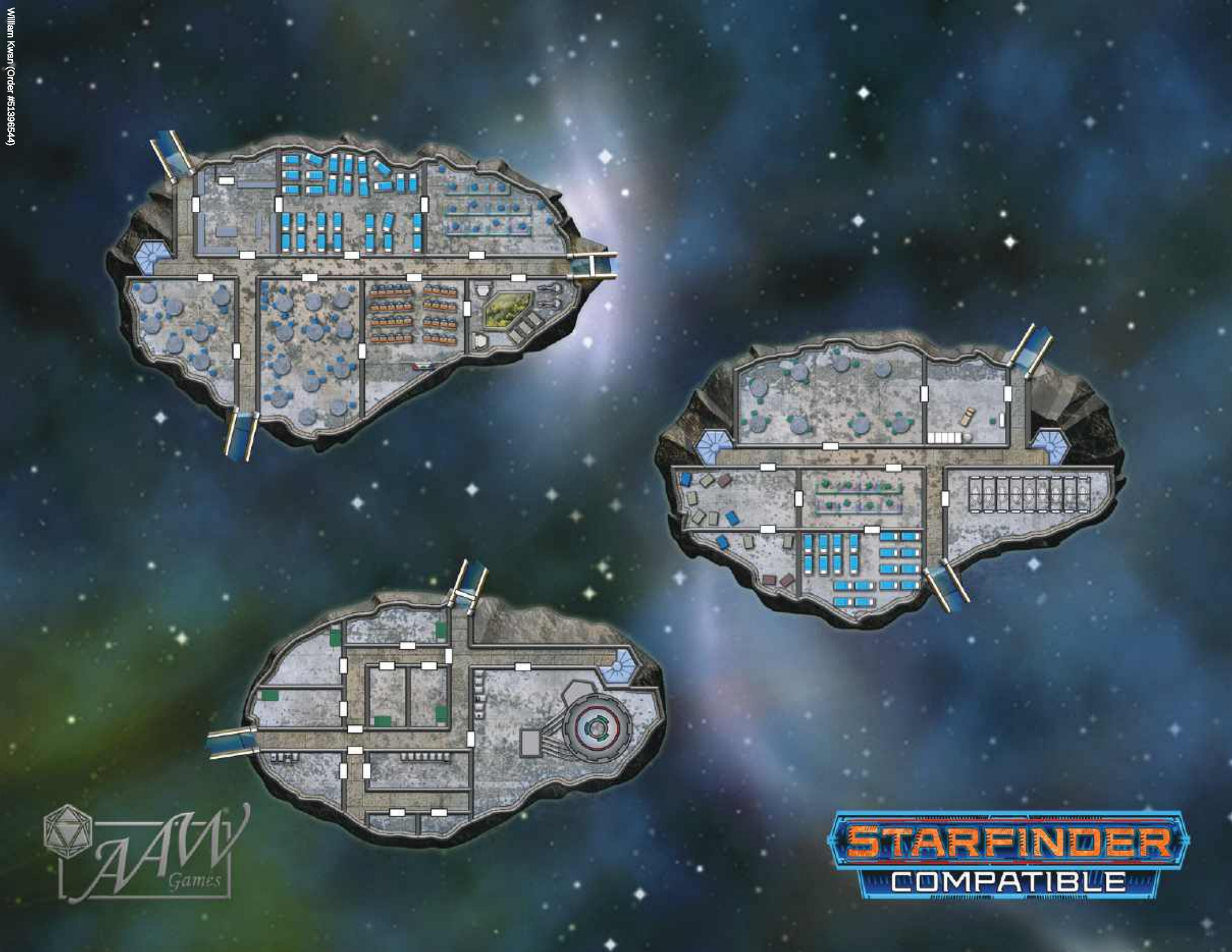

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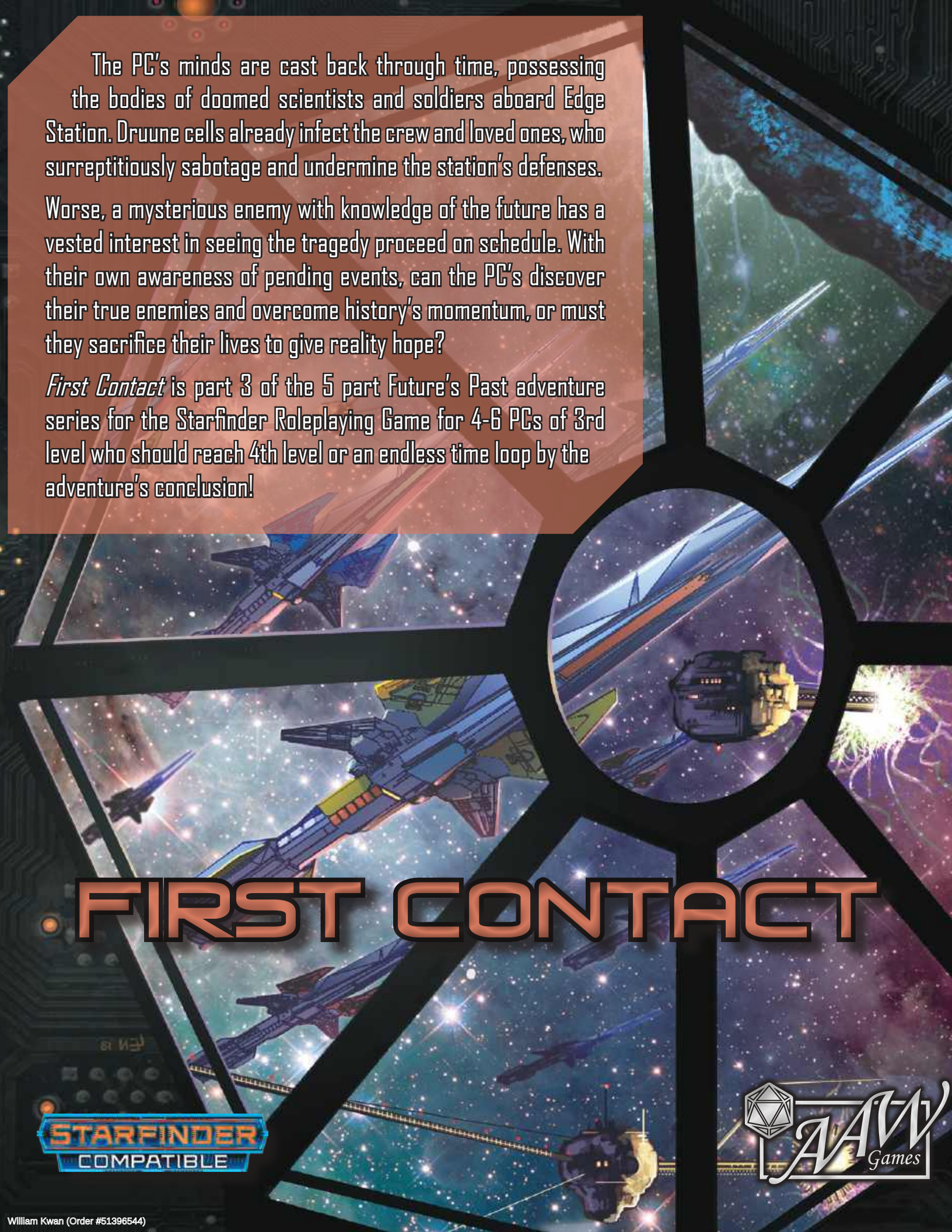

The PC's minds are cast back through time, possessing the bodies of doomed scientists and soldiers aboard Edge Station. Druune cells already infect the crew and loved ones, who surreptitiously sabotage and undermine the station's defenses.

Worse, a mysterious enemy with knowledge of the future has a vested interest in seeing the tragedy proceed on schedule. With their own awareness of pending events, can the PC's discover their true enemies and overcome history's momentum, or must they sacrifice their lives to give reality hope?

First Contact is part 3 of the 5 part Future's Past adventure series for the Starfinder Roleplaying Game for 4-6 PCs of 3rd level who should reach 4th level or an endless time loop by the adventure's conclusion!

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